



Project Address: 130 E Gilman Street
Application Type: Recommendation for approval of subdivision of landmark site
Legistar File ID # [30331](#)
Prepared By: Amy L. Scanlon, Preservation Planner, Planning Division

Summary

Applicant/Property Owner: Gary Brown, University of Wisconsin

Requested Action/Proposal Summary: The applicant requests that the Landmarks Commission recommend to the Plan Commission to approve the subdivision of the landmark site located at 130 E Gilman in the Mansion Hill (local) Historic District. The property is currently shared with the University of Wisconsin Lifesaving Station.

Applicable Regulations & Standards: Section 33.19 of the Madison General Ordinances (see below)

Review Required By: Landmarks Commission

Background Information

Parcel Location: The subject site is a designated landmark site located in the Mansion Hill (local) historic district and in the Mansion Hill National Register Historic District.

Relevant Landmarks Ordinance Sections:

33.19(5)(i)1. Review proposed land divisions and subdivision plats of landmark sites and properties in Historic Districts to determine whether the proposed lot sizes negatively impact the historic character or significance of a landmark or landmark site and whether the proposed lot sizes are compatible with adjacent lot sizes and maintain the general lot size pattern of the Historic District. The Landmarks Commission review shall be advisory to the Plan Commission.

Analysis and Conclusion

A brief discussion of 33.19(5)(i)1 follows:

The current lot is large in relation to the lots across E Gilman Street; however, it is waterfront property and the current lot size seems appropriate for its historic context. This property was historically a grand mansion of some of Madison's elite families and then later the official residence of seventeen Wisconsin Governors. Many important social and cultural events took place on this site and certainly many of them were near the water. In 1870 internationally renowned violinist, Ole Bull, married Sara Thorp on the property and according to the landmark nomination, "their wedding was the occasion for the most elaborate festivities Madison had ever seen." Also according to the nomination, Bull is responsible for creating a terraced embankment of Norwegian gardens leading to the lake and a croquet ground.

In 1950 the property was sold to the University of Wisconsin and has been recently used as a student residence hall for Knapp graduate scholars. The date of construction for the boathouse/lifesaving station is unknown, but presumed to be in 1970 or 1971. The Executive Residence was designated a landmark in January of 1972, likely concurrent with or slightly after the construction of the boathouse.

The CSM proposes creating a much smaller lot than what currently exists which may be more consistent with the size of other adjacent lots in the historic district, but somewhat diminishes the historic character of the landmark site. The zoning code requires a 30' cross access easement width instead of 20' as drawn on the site plan in the submission materials dated 4/18/13. This increased easement width would reduce the width of the landmark site (Lot 1) by 10'.

While staff is concerned that the size of Lot 2 may allow for future development that may negatively impact the landmark site (Lot 1), it should be noted that any proposal for future development on Lot 2 requiring Plan Commission approval would come back before the Landmarks Commission for an advisory recommendation for development adjacent to a landmark.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Landmarks Commission advise the Plan Commission that, beyond the structure itself, a contributing factor to the landmark status of the site is the large lawn that slopes down to the lake and that staff would prefer to see the rear lot line moved closer to the lake to aid in preserving the historic landscape and context.